

REMARKS

There remains pending in this application claims 1-5, of which claims 1, 4 and 5 are independent. No claims have been added or cancelled.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application is respectfully sought.

Applicants' invention as now featured in independent claim 1 is directed to a sheet discharging apparatus which comprises a sheet discharging unit which discharges a sheet and a charge eliminating member which is arranged on a downstream side of a sheet discharging direction of the sheet discharging unit. The invention is characterized in that the charge eliminating member is arranged along the sheet discharging direction so as to be opposite to a surface of the sheet being discharged by the sheet discharging unit, and a tip portion of the charge eliminating member faces toward the downstream side in the sheet discharging direction.

All pending claims of the above application stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Murakami et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,478,061). In view of the above amendments, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Murakami et al. is directed to a sheet post-processing apparatus arranged within the main body of a copy machine. In the non-post-treating mode, the leading end portion of the sheet conveyed out from the conveying rollers 4,5 is led between the sheet discharging rollers 22,23 by the movable sheet guide 7, the guide being at the position of the non-post-treating mode, and the sheet is discharged onto the stacking tray 16. When in the post-treating mode, the leading end portion of the sheet is led toward the direction of the discharging opening 37 by the moveable sheet guide 7 which is at the position of the post-treating mode, and thus the

leading end portion falls on the staple tray 11. After the sheet is treated by the stapler 14, the sheet is discharged onto the stacking tray 16 via a pressing-operation by the pusher 15.

In Murakami et al., however, the charge eliminating brush 10 provided at the movable sheet guide 7 via the brush supporting member 9 is arranged so as to come into contact at approximately right angles with the sheet discharged from the sheet discharging rollers 22,23 or conveyed along the movable sheet guide 7, as is evident from Figures 1 and 4.

In contrast, in the present invention, the charge eliminating member is arranged along the sheet discharging direction so as to oppose the discharge sheet. As a result, the area opposite to the sheet can be widened so that the electrostatic charge can be eliminated and maintained for a significant amount of time.

Accordingly, the applied art does not feature a charge eliminating member which is arranged along the sheet discharging direction towards the opposite of the surface of the sheet being discharged by the discharging unit, and a tip portion of the charge eliminating member facing the downstream side in the sheet discharging direction. As such, it is respectfully submitted that the applied reference does not disclose or suggest the invention as recited in claim 1.

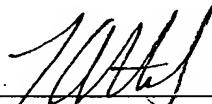
Each of claim 2-5 incorporates the features discussed above with respect to claim 1 and are therefore patentable over the art of record for reasons noted above with respect to claim 1. In addition, each recite features of the invention still further distinguishing it from the applied art. Favorable and independent consideration thereof is respectfully sought.

Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding matters in the above application have been addressed and that this application is in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the above application are respectfully sought.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



---

Lawrence A. Stahl  
Attorney for Applicants  
Registration No. 30,110

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO  
30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, New York 10112-3801  
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

LAS:eyw

DC\_MAIN 189253v1